



Fatality #23 - September 5, 2003
Exploding Vessels Under Pressure - Surface - Virginia
Twin Star Mining, Inc. - No. 2 Mine

COAL MINE FATALITY - On September 5, 2003, a 28 year-old utility man, with 10 years of mining experience, was fatally injured at a surface mine. The victim and a mechanic were located in a 992-G front-end loader bucket (not mounted on equipment). For reasons unrelated to work, the victim was using an unlit torch to introduce acetylene into an empty 55-gallon anti-freeze drum when an explosion occurred. The utility man was fatally injured while the mechanic and two other employees located approximately 8 to 10 feet away received flash burns.



Best Practices

- Require that compressed gases are used properly for their intended purpose.
- Ensure proper handling and use of torches.
- Train employees on dangers associated with improper use of acetylene.
- Never attempt to transfer acetylene gas into any other container.
- Examine contents of containers prior to cutting or welding.
- Fill containers with water or other inert materials prior to cutting or welding to prevent the ignition of flammable/combustible material or gasses.
- Ensure familiarity with Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) of all materials on mine property, especially the flammability and combustibility characteristics.
- Ensure that employees do not engage in horseplay.

Note: This fatalgram has been revised from its originally posted version to reflect additional information obtained during the investigation.